

February 26, 1975

PRESIDENT: Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, may I ask a question of Senator Koch?

SENATOR KOCH: Yes.

SENATOR DeCAMP: This costs \$4 million. Is that right?

SENATOR KOCH: No, Senator DeCamp. Originally the bill was requesting a million dollars annually so that you could build the trust fund to \$12 million where earnings would adequately care for the needs of veterans. However, the Appropriations Committee, and I agree with them, saw fit to only place \$1 million this year and then annually the veterans would have to return to increase that trust fund. It's \$1 million right now.

SENATOR DeCAMP: OK. In view of the fact that this does involve a rather large expenditure, could you give me some more background on this fund. Specifically what I'm interested in knowing is let's say the history of the last 12 or 15 years. As I understand, it wasn't that great a fund originally and it has increased tremendously. Maybe I'm wrong on that. It's just a fund that goes up and down at times.

SENATOR KOCH: I'll give you an example of what's happened. You're well aware of medical costs. The average claim in 1958-1959 was \$88.55; 1963-64 was \$106.92; 1968-69 was \$162.57; 1973-74, the last fiscal year was \$189.51, that is the average benefit for the needy veteran. As a result of the rising costs of medical care and other types of programs there is an inflated figure and that's why the trust fund itself is being depleted.

SENATOR DeCAMP: OK, then . . .

SENATOR KOCH: Additionally, Senator DeCamp, we have 11,000 veterans last year who had mainly their Viet Nam - Korean veterans who needed help.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Help that what, they couldn't get under their veterans federal benefits, or what?

SENATOR KOCH: I'm talking . . . for some reason they were qualified to receive help from this emergency fund for a brief period of time.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Then what are the qualifications for getting this money?

SENATOR KOCH: The qualifications . . . you go through the service officer in the State of Nebraska. The service officer approves and applies for it with the state officer, then it's granted or denied.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Well I realize those aren't the qualifications, that's the mechanical procedure for applying for some money, and somebody deciding. What are the qualifications for getting it? You have qualifications for getting Federal money if you're a Viet Nam veteran. Medical benefits, GI benefits for loans and housing, and everything else. I want to know specifically when you would